

In light of the importance of our fisheries relationship with the Russian Federation, I urge that the Congress give favorable consideration to this Agreement at an early date.

George W. Bush

The White House,
January 15, 2009.

**Message to the Senate Transmitting
the Malta-United States Taxation
Convention**

January 15, 2009

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for Senate advice and consent to ratification, the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Malta for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion With Respect to Taxes on Income, signed on August 8, 2008, at Valletta (the “proposed Convention”). I also transmit for the information of the Senate the report of the Department of State, which includes an Overview of the proposed Convention.

The proposed Convention provides for reduced withholding rates on cross-border payments of dividends, interest, royalties, and other income. The proposed Convention contains a restrictive provision designed to prevent “treaty shopping,” which is the inappropriate use of a tax treaty by third-country residents. The proposed Convention also provides for the exchange of information between the competent authorities to facilitate the administration of each country’s tax laws.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the proposed Convention and give its advice and consent to ratification.

George W. Bush

The White House,
January 15, 2009.

Farewell Address to the Nation

January 15, 2009

Thank you. Fellow citizens: For 8 years, it has been my honor to serve as your Presi-

dent. The first decade of this new century has been a period of consequence, a time set apart. Tonight, with a thankful heart, I have asked for a final opportunity to share some thoughts on the journey that we have traveled together and the future of our Nation.

Five days from now, the world will witness the vitality of American democracy. In a tradition dating back to our founding, the Presidency will pass to a successor chosen by you, the American people. Standing on the steps of the Capitol will be a man whose history reflects the enduring promise of our land. This is a moment of hope and pride for our whole Nation. And I join all Americans in offering best wishes to President-elect Obama, his wife Michelle, and their two beautiful girls.

Tonight I am filled with gratitude to Vice President Cheney and members of my administration; to Laura, who brought joy to this house and love to my life; to our wonderful daughters, Barbara and Jenna; to my parents, whose examples have provided strength for a lifetime. And above all, I thank the American people for the trust you have given me. I thank you for the prayers that have lifted my spirits. And I thank you for the countless acts of courage, generosity, and grace that I have witnessed these past 8 years.

This evening my thoughts return to the first night I addressed you from this house, September the 11th, 2001. That morning, terrorists took nearly 3,000 lives in the worst attack on America since Pearl Harbor. I remember standing in the rubble of the World Trade Center 3 days later, surrounded by rescuers who had been working around the clock. I remember talking to brave souls who charged through smoke-filled corridors at the Pentagon and to husbands and wives whose loved ones became heroes aboard Flight 93. I remember Arlene Howard, who gave me her fallen son’s police shield as a reminder of all that was lost. And I still carry his badge.

As the years passed, most Americans were able to return to life much as it had been before 9/11. But I never did. Every morning, I received a briefing on the threats to our Nation. I vowed to do everything in my power to keep us safe.

Over the past 7 years, a new Department of Homeland Security has been created. The military, the intelligence community, and the FBI have been transformed. Our Nation is equipped with new tools to monitor the terrorists' movements, freeze their finances, and break up their plots. And with strong allies at our side, we have taken the fight to the terrorists and those who support them. Afghanistan has gone from a nation where the Taliban harbored Al Qaida and stoned women in the streets to a young democracy that is fighting terror and encouraging girls to go to school. Iraq has gone from a brutal dictatorship and a sworn enemy of America to an Arab democracy at the heart of the Middle East and a friend of the United States.

There is legitimate debate about many of these decisions, but there can be little debate about the results. America has gone more than 7 years without another terrorist attack on our soil. This is a tribute to those who toil night and day to keep us safe: law enforcement officers, intelligence analysts, homeland security and diplomatic personnel, and the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

Our Nation is blessed to have citizens who volunteer to defend us in this time of danger. I have cherished meeting these selfless patriots and their families. And America owes you a debt of gratitude. And to all our men and women in uniform listening tonight: There has been no higher honor than serving as your Commander in Chief.

The battles waged by our troops are part of a broader struggle between two dramatically different systems. Under one, a small band of fanatics demands total obedience to an oppressive ideology, condemns women to subservience, and marks unbelievers for murder. The other system is based on the conviction that freedom is the universal gift of Almighty God, and that liberty and justice light the path to peace.

This is the belief that gave birth to our Nation. And in the long run, advancing this belief is the only practical way to protect our citizens. When people live in freedom, they do not willingly choose leaders who pursue campaigns of terror. When people have hope in the future, they will not cede their lives

to violence and extremism. So around the world, America is promoting human liberty, human rights, and human dignity. We're standing with dissidents and young democracies, providing AIDS medicine to dying patients—to bring dying patients back to life, and sparing mothers and babies from malaria. And this great republic, born alone in liberty, is leading the world toward a new age when freedom belongs to all nations.

For 8 years, we've also strived to expand opportunity and hope here at home. Across our country, students are rising to meet higher standards in public schools. A new Medicare prescription drug benefit is bringing peace of mind to seniors and the disabled. Every taxpayer pays lower income taxes. The addicted and suffering are finding new hope through faith-based programs. Vulnerable human life is better protected. Funding for our veterans has nearly doubled. America's air and water and lands are measurably cleaner. And the Federal bench includes wise new members like Justice Sam Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts.

When challenges to our prosperity emerged, we rose to meet them. Facing the prospect of a financial collapse, we took decisive measures to safeguard our economy. These are very tough times for hard-working families. But the toll would be far worse if we had not acted. All Americans are in this together. And together, with determination and hard work, we will restore our economy to the path of growth. We will show the world once again the resilience of America's free enterprise system.

Like all who have held this office before me, I have experienced setbacks. And there are things I would do differently if given the chance. Yet I've always acted with the best interests of our country in mind. I have followed my conscience and done what I thought was right. You may not agree with some of the tough decisions I have made, but I hope you can agree that I was willing to make the tough decisions.

The decades ahead will bring more hard choices for our country, and there are some guiding principles that shape—should shape our course.

While our Nation is safer than it was 7 years ago, the gravest threat to our people

remains another terrorist attack. Our enemies are patient and determined to strike again. America did nothing to seek or deserve this conflict. But we have been given solemn responsibilities, and we must meet them. We must resist complacency. We must keep our resolve. And we must never let down our guard.

At the same time, we must continue to engage the world with confidence and clear purpose. In the face of threats from abroad, it can be tempting to seek comfort by turning inward. But we must reject isolationism and its companion, protectionism. Retreating behind our borders would only invite danger. In the 21st century, security and prosperity at home depend on the expansion of liberty abroad. If America does not lead the cause of freedom, that cause will not be led.

As we address these challenges and others we cannot foresee tonight, America must maintain our moral clarity. I've often spoken to you about good and evil, and this has made some uncomfortable. But good and evil are present in this world, and between the two there can be no compromise. Murdering the innocent to advance an ideology is wrong every time, everywhere. Freeing people from oppression and despair is eternally right. This Nation must continue to speak out for justice and truth. We must always be willing to act in their defense and to advance the cause of peace.

President Thomas Jefferson once wrote: "I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past." As I leave the house he occupied two centuries ago, I share that optimism. America is a young country, full of vitality, constantly growing and renewing itself. And even in the toughest times, we lift our eyes to the broad horizon ahead.

I have confidence in the promise of America because I know the character of our people. This is a nation that inspires immigrants to risk everything for the dream of freedom. This is a nation where citizens show calm in times of danger and compassion in the face of suffering. We see examples of America's character all around us. And Laura and I have invited some of them to join us in the White House this evening.

We see America's character in Dr. Tony Recasner, a principal who opened a new

charter school from the ruins of Hurricane Katrina. We see it in Julio Medina, a former inmate who leads a faith-based program to help prisoners returning to society. We see it in Staff Sergeant Aubrey McDade, who charged into an ambush in Iraq and rescued three of his fellow marines.

We see America's character in Bill Krissoff, a surgeon from California. His son Nathan, a marine, gave his life in Iraq. When I met Dr. Krissoff and his family, he delivered some surprising news. He told me he wanted to join the Navy Medical Corps in honor of his son. This good man was 60 years old, 18 years above the age limit. But his petition for a waiver was granted, and for the past year he has trained in battlefield medicine. Lieutenant Commander Krissoff could not be here tonight because he will soon deploy to Iraq, where he will help save America's wounded warriors and uphold the legacy of his fallen son.

In citizens like these, we see the best of our country, resilient and hopeful, caring and strong. These virtues give me an unshakable faith in America. We have faced danger and trial, and there's more ahead. But with the courage of our people and confidence in our ideals, this great Nation will never tire, never falter, and never fail.

It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve as your President. There have been good days and tough days. But every day I have been inspired by the greatness of our country and uplifted by the goodness of our people. I have been blessed to represent this Nation we love. And I will always be honored to carry a title that means more to me than any other, citizen of the United States of America.

And so, my fellow Americans, for the final time, good night. May God bless this house and our next President, and may God bless you and our wonderful country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:01 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Malia and Natasha "Sasha" Obama, daughters of President-elect Barack Obama; Arlene Howard, mother of Port Authority Police officer George Howard, who was killed at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001; Dr. Anthony "Tony" Recasner, principal, Samuel J. Green Charter School, New Orleans, LA; and

Julio Medina, executive director, Exodus Transitional Community, New York, NY. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Proclamation 8340—Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday, 2009

January 15, 2009

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On the Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday, we recognize one of history's most consequential advocates for equality and civil rights, and we celebrate his powerful message of justice and hope. Our Nation is better because Dr. King was a man of courage and vision who understood that love and compassion will always triumph over bitterness and hatred.

As Americans, we believe it is self-evident that all men are created equal and that freedom is not a grant of government but a gift from the Author of Life. Dr. King trusted in these beliefs articulated in our founding documents even when our country's practices did not live up to its promises. He roused the conscience of a complacent Nation by drawing attention to the ugliness of discrimination and segregation and by calling on Americans to live up to our guarantee of equality.

Our Nation has seen tremendous progress in redeeming the ideals of America and protecting every person's God-given rights. The historic election of Barack Obama as President of the United States reflects the real advances our Nation has made in the fight against the bigotry that Dr. King opposed. More work remains, though, and we must heed Dr. King's words that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." By continuing to spread his message and demanding that the equal rights he fought for are extended to all people, we can ensure that the dignity of every person is respected and that the hope for a better tomorrow reaches every community throughout the world.

As we observe Dr. King's birthday, we commemorate his leadership and strength of

character. We go forward with confidence that if we remain true to our founding principles, our Nation will continue to advance the cause of justice and remain a beacon of hope to people everywhere.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 19, 2009, as the Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday. I encourage all Americans to observe this day with appropriate civic, community, and service programs and activities in honor of Dr. King's life and legacy.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:15 a.m., January 21, 2009]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 16, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 22.

Statement on Death of Andrew Wyeth

January 16, 2009

Laura and I deeply mourn the death of American painter Andrew Wyeth.

Mr. Wyeth captured America in his paintings of his native Pennsylvania and Maine.

Mr. Wyeth was no stranger to White House recognitions. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963. President Nixon sponsored an exhibition of Andrew Wyeth's paintings at the White House. In 1990, my father presented Mr. Wyeth the Congressional Gold Medal. And in 2007, I awarded Mr. Wyeth the National Medal of Arts in recognition of his lifetime achievement and contribution to American arts and culture.

Laura and I are fortunate to have known Andrew Wyeth and to have had the pleasure of enjoying his work. In 2005, Andrew and his wife, Betsy, presented to the White